

## CLAIMS

[c1] 1. A drawing number management system comprising:  
a database for indicating blocks of drawing numbers issued to requestors,  
the drawing numbers having a plurality of different formats;  
a submission component for receiving requests for an unissued block of  
drawing numbers of a certain format from a requestor;  
a selection component for selecting an unissued block of drawing  
numbers in accordance with the request received from the  
requestor by interacting with the database; and  
an issuing component for issuing the selected block of drawing numbers.

[c2] 2. The drawing number management system of claim 1  
wherein the submission component also receives a search request, wherein  
further the search request includes one or more search criteria, and further  
comprising a search component for searching the database component for one  
or more drawing numbers that satisfy the search criteria, wherein information  
related to the drawing numbers is also found by the search component.

[c3] 3. The drawing number management system of claim 1 further  
comprising an access component for specifying rights for particular requestors to  
request blocks of drawing numbers.

[c4] 4. The drawing number management system of claim 1  
wherein at least one of the drawing numbers is formatted to include one or more  
strings of numbers and one or more letters.

[c5] 5. The drawing number management system of claim 1 wherein at least one of the drawing numbers is formatted in 1A1 format.

[c6] 6. The drawing number management system of claim 1 wherein the database stores information related to at least one organization associated with a block of drawing numbers.

[c7] 7. The drawing number management system of claim 6 wherein further the information related to the at least one organization associated with a block of drawing numbers is a product identification code.

[c8] 8. The drawing number management system of claim 1 wherein the submission component receives information from the requestor specifying a desired block size for the block of drawing numbers.

[c9] 9. The drawing number management system of claim 1 wherein the submission component receives information from the requestor specifying at least one part of the drawing number to be included in all drawing numbers in the issued block.

[c10] 10. The drawing number management system of claim 1 wherein the drawing numbers are formatted to include a prefix, and wherein further the selection component automatically selects the prefix for the first drawing number in the issued block.

[c11] 11. The drawing number management system of claim 1 wherein the drawing numbers are formatted to include a prefix, and wherein

further the submission component receives the prefix for the first drawing number in the issued block from the requestor.

[c12] 12. The drawing number management system of claim 1 wherein the database contains indications of drawing numbers in a plurality of formats, and wherein further the submission component receives requests for unissued blocks of drawing numbers in a plurality of formats.

[c13] 13. A drawing number management system comprising:  
a storage means for storing information relating to blocks of drawing numbers for issuance to requestors;  
a receiving means for receiving requests for an unissued block of drawing numbers from a requestor;  
a selection means for selecting an unissued block of drawing numbers;  
an access means for specifying rights for particular requestors;  
a search means for searching the storage means for one or more drawing numbers; and  
an issuing means for issuing the selected block of drawing numbers.

[c14] 14. A method in a computer system for issuing a block of drawing numbers to a requestor comprising:  
storing information relating to blocks of drawing numbers for issuance to requestors, the drawing numbers having a plurality of different formats;  
receiving requests for an unissued block of drawing numbers from a requestor;  
selecting an unissued block of drawing numbers of a certain format in accordance with the request received from the requestor; and

issuing the selected block of drawing numbers.

[c15] 15. The method of claim 14 further comprising:  
receiving a search request, wherein the search request includes one or more search criteria; and  
searching for one or more drawing numbers that satisfy the search criteria.

[c16] 16. The method of claim 14 further comprising specifying rights for particular requestors to request blocks of drawing numbers.

[c17] 17. The method of claim 14 further comprising storing information related to at least one organization associated with an individual drawing number.

[c18] 18. The method of claim 17 wherein further the information related to the at least one organization associated with an individual drawing number is a product identification code.

[c19] 19. The method of claim 18 further comprising receiving information from the requestor specifying a desired format for the selected block of drawing numbers.

[c20] 20. The method of claim 14 further comprising receiving information from the requestor specifying a desired block size for the selected block of drawing numbers.

[c21] 21. The method of claim 13 further comprising receiving information from the requestor specifying at least one part of the drawing number to be included in all drawing numbers in the selected block of drawing numbers.

[c22] 22. A computer-readable medium whose contents cause a computer to issue a block of drawing numbers by a method comprising:

storing information relating to blocks of drawing numbers for issuance to requestors, the drawing numbers having a plurality of different formats;

receiving requests for an unissued block of drawing numbers from a requestor;

selecting an unissued block of drawing numbers in accordance with the request received from the requestor; and

issuing the selected block of drawing numbers.

[c23] 23. The computer-readable medium of claim 22 further comprising:

receiving a search request, wherein the search request includes one or more search criteria; and

searching for one or more drawing numbers that satisfy the search criteria.

[c24] 24. The computer-readable medium of claim 22 further comprising specifying rights for particular requestors to request blocks of drawing numbers.

[c25] 25. The computer-readable medium of claim 22 further comprising storing information related to at least one organization associated with an individual drawing number.

[c26] 26. The computer-readable medium of claim 25 wherein further the information related to the at least one organization associated with an individual drawing number is a product identification code.

[c27] 27. The computer-readable medium of claim 22 further comprising receiving information from the requestor specifying a desired format for the selected block of drawing numbers.

[c28] 28. The computer-readable medium of claim 22 further comprising receiving information from the requestor specifying a desired block size for the selected block of drawing numbers.

[c29] 29. The computer-readable medium of claim 22 further comprising receiving information from the requestor specifying at least one part of the drawing number to be included in all drawing numbers in the selected block of drawing numbers.

[c30] 30. A computer-readable medium containing a data structure for use by a drawing number management system, the data structure comprising:  
an indication of a drawing block size, wherein the drawing block size  
represents the total number of drawing numbers that were issued;  
and

an indication of a first drawing number in a range of a block of drawing numbers, wherein the first drawing number includes a prefix, a letter, and a suffix.

[c31] 31. The computer-readable medium of claim 30 further comprising information identifying the requestor of the block of drawing numbers.

[c32] 32. The computer-readable medium of claim 30 further comprising information identifying the product identification code associated with the block of drawing numbers.

[c33] 33. The computer-readable medium of claim 30 wherein the indication of a drawing block size is derived from the first drawing number and a second drawing number.

[c34] 34. The computer-readable medium of claim 30 wherein the indication of the first drawing number is derived from a second drawing number and the indication of a drawing block size.

[c35] 35. A method in a client computer for issuance of a block of drawing numbers, the method comprising:

receiving from a requestor a request that a block of drawing numbers is to be issued to the requestor;

sending to a server computer a request that the requestor is to be issued a block of drawing numbers;

receiving from the server computer an indication of an issued block of drawing numbers; and

displaying to the requestor an indication of the issued block of drawing numbers, wherein the server computer, upon receiving the request that the requestor desires a block of drawing numbers, selects an unissued block of drawing numbers based on currently issued blocks of drawing numbers and sends to the client computer the indication of the selected block of drawing numbers issued to the user.

[c36] 36. The method of claim 35 wherein the request from the user includes a desired format for the block of drawing numbers.

[c37] 37. The method of claim 35 wherein the request from the user includes at least one part of the drawing number to be included in all drawing numbers in the issued block of drawing numbers.

[c38] 38. The method of claim 35 wherein the request from the user includes a desired block size for the block of drawing numbers.

[c39] 39. The method of claim 35 wherein the request from the user includes information associated with the requestor.

[c40] 40. A computer-readable medium whose contents cause a client computer to request a block of drawing numbers by a method comprising:

receiving from a requestor a request that a block of drawing numbers is to be issued to the requestor;

sending to a server computer a request that the requestor is to be issued a block of drawing numbers;

receiving from the server computer an indication of an issued block of drawing numbers; and



displaying to the requestor an indication of the issued block of drawing numbers, wherein the server computer, upon receiving the request that the requestor desires a block of drawing numbers, selects an unissued block of drawing numbers based on currently issued blocks of drawing numbers and sends to the client computer the indication of the selected block of drawing numbers issued to the user.

[c41] 41. The computer-readable medium of claim 40 wherein the request from the user includes a desired format for the block of drawing numbers.

[c42] 42. The computer-readable medium of claim 40 wherein the request from the user includes at least one part of the drawing number to be included in all drawing numbers in the issued block of drawing numbers.

[c43] 43. The computer-readable medium of claim 40 wherein the request from the user includes a desired block size for the block of drawing numbers.

[c44] 44. The computer-readable medium of claim 40 wherein the request from the user includes information associated with the requestor.

[c45] 45. A drawing number block request system on a client computer comprising:

an input component for receiving from a requestor a request that a block of drawing numbers is to be issued to the requestor;

a submission component for sending to a server computer a request that the requestor is to be issued a block of drawing numbers;

a receiving component for receiving from the server computer an indication of an issued block of drawing numbers; and

a display component for displaying to the requestor an indication of the issued block of drawing numbers, wherein the server computer, upon receiving the request that the requestor desires a block of drawing numbers, selects an unissued block of drawing numbers based on currently issued blocks of drawing numbers and sends to the client computer the indication of the selected block of drawing numbers issued to the user.

[c46] 46. The apparatus of claim 45 wherein the request from the user includes a desired format for the block of drawing numbers.

[c47] 47. The apparatus of claim 45 wherein the request from the user includes at least one part of the drawing number to be included in all drawing numbers in the issued block of drawing numbers.

[c48] 48. The apparatus of claim 45 wherein the request from the user includes a desired block size for the block of drawing numbers.

[c49] 49. The apparatus of claim 45 wherein the request from the user includes information associated with the requestor.

[c50] 50. A drawing number management system comprising:  
a client computer, wherein a requestor uses the client computer to  
request a block of drawing numbers, including:  
an input component for receiving a request for a block of  
drawing numbers;

a submission component for sending to a server computer a request for a block of drawing numbers;

a receiving component for receiving from the server computer an indication of an issued block of drawing numbers; and

a display component for displaying to the requestor an indication of the issued block of drawing numbers; and

a drawing number server, wherein the block requestor computer and the drawing number server communicate via a computer network, including:

a database for indicating blocks of drawing numbers issued to requestors;

a submission component for receiving requests for an unissued block of drawing numbers from a requestor;

a selection component for selecting an unissued block of drawing numbers in accordance with the request received from the requestor by interacting with the database; and

an issuing component for issuing the selected block of drawing numbers.

[c51] 51. A method in a computer system for issuing a block of drawing numbers to a requestor on a client computer comprising:

receiving a request for a block of drawing numbers on a client computer;

transmitting the request to a server computer;

storing information relating to blocks of drawing numbers for issuance to requestors;

selecting an unissued block of drawing numbers of a certain format in accordance with the request received from the client computer;

issuing the selected block of drawing numbers;  
transmitting an indication of the issued block of drawing numbers  
to the client computer; and  
displaying to the requestor an indication of the issued block of drawing  
numbers.

[c52] 52. A document number management system comprising:

a database for indicating blocks of document numbers issued to  
requestors;

a submission component for receiving requests for blocks of document  
numbers of a particular format from a requestor;

a selection component for selecting an unissued block of document  
numbers in accordance with the request received from the  
requestor by interacting with the database; and

an issuing component for issuing the selected block of document  
numbers.

53. The document number management system of claim 52 wherein  
the submission component also receives a search request, wherein  
further the search request includes one or more search criteria,  
and further comprising a search component for searching the  
database component for one or more document numbers that  
satisfy the search criteria, wherein information related to the  
document numbers is also found by the search component.

[c53] 54. A method in a computer system for issuing blocks of document numbers to a requestor comprising:

storing information related to blocks of document numbers for issuance to requestors;

receiving requests for a block of document numbers of a particular format from a requestor;

selecting an unissued block of document numbers in accordance with the request received from the requestor by interacting with the database; and

issuing the selected block of document numbers.

[c54] 55. A method in a client computer for receiving information about a drawing number, the method comprising:

receiving from a requestor a request for information about a particular drawing number be displayed to the requestor;

sending to a server computer a request for information about the particular drawing number;

receiving from the server computer information about the particular drawing number, wherein the information about the particular drawing number includes an indication of the organization currently responsible for the particular drawing number; and

displaying to the requestor an indication of the information about the particular drawing number, wherein the server computer, upon receiving the request that the requestor desires information about the particular drawing number, searches a database to find the information and sends to the client computer the indication of the information about the particular drawing number.

[c55] 56. A method in a database for storing information about drawing numbers, the method comprising:

storing information about a plurality of drawing numbers, wherein each drawing number has a unique number in a particular format to identify the drawing number, and wherein further the drawing numbers have unique numbers in a plurality of different formats; and

receiving from a server computer a request for information about the drawing numbers.

[c56] 57. The method of claim 56 wherein the request for information about the drawing numbers includes a request for information about blocks of drawing numbers.

[c57] 58. The method of claim 56 wherein the request for information about the drawing numbers includes a request for information about an organization with responsibility for a particular drawing number.